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SOURCE Przegląd Związkowy, Vol XXIII, No 7, 1952.DUTIES OF POLISH TRADE UNIONS IN MANPOWER CRISIS

In the following article, which outlines the tasks of the trade unions in alleviating Poland's serious manpower problem, a new ministry is mentioned. There is no evidence in the press and periodicals available in FDD that a Ministry of Labor Reserves had actually been created by law as of July 1952, but it is apparent that the administrative machinery was being set up for stepped-up manpower recruitment and population transfers.

This was indicated by the Directive of the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare of 11 June 1952 on the duties of local agencies in recruitment of unskilled manpower (Warsaw, Monitor Polski, No A-54, Item 805, 26 June 1952), the Directive of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of 9 July 1952 on manpower recruitment plans and procedures to be followed by enterprises (Warsaw, Monitor Polski, No A-66, Item 1016, 8 August 1952), and the Directive of the Council of Ministers of 17 July 1952 on increased employment of women in the national economy (Warsaw, Monitor Polski, No A-73, Item 1160, 30 August 1952).

President Bierut has studied the causes of failures in production plans and listed a number of requirements necessary to insure the complete fulfillment of Polish production plans. All these requirements should be thoroughly analyzed by the trade union activists, who should then present the CRZZ (Centralna Rada Związków Zawodowych, Central Council of Trade Unions) and all the trade union echelons with concrete objectives in their own sphere of activity.

The first requirement is for an organized method of supplying Polish enterprises with the necessary manpower. This very important problem has been overlooked heretofore by trade union leaders. It was considered an administrative and management problem in planning, distribution, and recruitment.

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The Ministerstwo Rezerw Pracy (Ministry of Labor Reserves) will handle the influx of new personnel in an organized way. The people's councils are obliged to insure the success of the recruitment program.

It is the obligation of the trade unions and factory councils to carry on campaigns to exploit the internal unused manpower potential of a given enterprise. They should campaign for improved work methods, for improved organization of work shifts, for better planning of vacations, and for prevention of accidents. They should also campaign for the enforcement of production norms and for raising production norms, and should campaign against absences and labor turnover. After an enterprise has realized its internal potentialities, it is then permitted to hire new personnel.

Discussions at the Seventh Plenum of the KC PZPR (Komitet Centralny, Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party) called attention to the fact that an enterprise with only 80 percent of its personnel strength was able to fulfill 100 percent of its plan by utilizing its internal potentialities, while the plan was not fulfilled by many enterprises with full personnel strength.

Many workers leave because new employees are received poorly, are given poor quarters and inadequate attention. For example, in February a group of workers were hired in Bialystok Wojewodztwo to work at the Bobrek Foundry. When they arrived for work, they received no attention nor were they assigned to work. The factory council took no interest. When finally they demanded that the construction administration take care of them, they were asked: "What did you come here for?" Disgusted with such treatment, they went to Warsaw on 4 March. In Warsaw they were hired and directed to another locality where they were quartered according to the recruiting regulations and started work on the following day.

The Komisja Przemysłowego Zjednoczenia Budowlanego (Commission of the Association of Industrial Construction) was asked to investigate the causes for the large labor turnover at the construction site of the Nowa Huta combine. They stated that the main reason for the large turnover was the poor organization of work at the construction site. There were too many people assigned to one job, and mistakes were made in calculating piecework and wages. Inadequate preparation caused work stoppages. Some construction administrations did not follow the provisions covering advance payments to newly recruited workers. There was an inadequate supply of food for the workers and not enough stores selling essential commodities. There was an inadequate supply of rubber boots, work clothing, and tools. Living quarters were poor. Water did not run regularly at the workmen's hostels. There was no systematic cultural program.

Following the example set by Soviet trade unions, the Polish trade unions should see to it that the newly hired workers are informed in detail about working conditions, and possibilities of advancement and of learning a trade. They should be assured of a good reception at the place of work and given proper attention. Good treatment and proper care of hired personnel are the best type of propaganda that can be used in recruiting more workers for the growing Polish enterprises.

It was pointed out at the Seventh Plenum that the cities also had an important manpower reserve in the large number of unemployed women. The insignificant increase in the employment of women is often caused by the management's distrust of women as workers. The trade unions must conduct a campaign against this old fashioned outlook.

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Trade unions must improve the working and living conditions of women, must raise the qualifications of employed women, must expand and improve nurseries and playgrounds, establish laundries at workers' settlements, and open clothes-mending shops, etc., to improve the living conditions of employed women.

The second requirement for fulfilling the plan is stepped-up mechanization.

The third requirement is to improve the skill of the workers, especially of the youth, by intensive training programs. The trade union organizations should take a lively interest in this matter.

The fourth requirement is to prevent labor turnover by eliminating the tendency to level wages and by improving the workers' living conditions. Labor turnover is a plague in industry. It makes it difficult, and even impossible, to fulfill the production plans, and it disorganizes Polish enterprises.

Despite the progress made, in many branches of industry there is insufficient differentiation in wages between skilled and unskilled workers, and between heavy and light work.

Piecework has not been promoted sufficiently in Poland. Mistakes in setting up work norms tend to equalize wages.

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